

DECISION RECORD
for the Whiteline Timber Sale
(Reference: Bly Mtn. / Swan Lake / Whiteline Reservoir
Forest Health and Woodland Treatments
Environmental Assessment #OR014-99-6)

The Whiteline Timber Sale was prepared under the Bly Mtn. / Swan Lake / Whiteline Reservoir Forest Health and Woodland Treatments Environmental Assessment (EA) #OR014-99-6 which provides for a separate Decision Record to be prepared at the time each sale is proposed. This Decision Record applies only to the Whiteline Timber Sale (the second timber sale proposed under this EA), which is scheduled to be sold August 29, 2001.

Consultation - The treatment area is outside the known range of the northern spotted owl and the boundary of the area analyzed in the Northwest Forest Plan. Therefore, no consultation was required for the northern spotted owl. Informal consultation has been completed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the entire analysis area (Bly Mtn., Swan Lake Rim, and Whiteline Reservoir) for Lost River and short nose suckers and bald eagles. A "no effect" determination has been made for all federally listed species.

My decision is to implement the Proposed Action Alternative (Alternative A) of the Bly Mtn. / Swan Lake / Whiteline Reservoir Forest Health and Woodland Treatments Environmental Assessment (EA #OR-014-99-6) for the Whiteline Timber Sale. This will involve harvesting approximately 360 thousand board feet (MBF) over approximately 200 acres. The EA addresses a number of issues including those raised during the public scoping and tours. Those issues that are addressed in the EA include;

- Number and size of trees to be removed (partial cutting versus clearcutting)
- Reduction of ground fuels
- Availability of firewood for the public
- Forest health problems on federal lands on the eastside
- Impact on deer herds
- Access into the area and on-going trash and dumping problems in Bly Mtn. Area
- Roadless areas \geq 1000 acres
- Treatment of older forest stands
- Roads (new construction and obliteration)
- Salvage
- Soil disturbance
- Vegetation disturbance
- Use of prescribed fire
- Riparian Reserve treatments
- Watershed Analysis

Some of the public scoping (March 23, 1999) issues that were raised are not applicable to the proposed treatments because the project areas are outside the Northwest Forest Plan geographic boundary or the issue is non existent in the area. These issues include:

- Soil and Vegetation disturbance in Key Watersheds - The term "Key Watersheds" is applicable to lands with the boundaries of the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP). There are no "Key Watersheds" in the Whiteline Timber Sale project area. The term "Key Watershed" was used in the NFP and are a system of large refugia that are crucial for maintaining and recovering habitat for at-risk stock of resident fish species. The Swan Lake Basin is a closed basin where the water drains into Swan Lake and normally dries up every summer or is utilized for agricultural purposes. There are no perennial or intermittent streams within the boundaries of the proposed timber sale.
- Soil and Vegetation disturbance in Municipal Watersheds. There are no Municipal Watersheds in Whiteline Timber Sale project area.
- Activities in Late Successional Reserves (LSRs). Late Successional Reserves are a land allocation of federal land within the NFP boundaries that are set aside to manage for late successional dependent species. The Whiteline Timber Sale project area is about 200 acres of scattered BLM blocks surrounded by private forested lands managed

- by Jeld-Wen Corporation.
- Surveys for "Survey and Manage Species". This is a NFP requirement only and is not required for KFRA lands east of Klamath Falls. Surveys were completed for bald eagles, golden eagles, goshawks, and great gray owls.
- Pacific Yew. Within the KFRA, Pacific Yew is located only in isolated areas and primarily in cooler westside riparian reserves in the Surveyor Mtn area.
- Northern Spotted Owl critical habitat. The Whiteline Timber Sale area is primarily a ponderosa pine/western juniper forest type and is outside the range of the northern spotted owl.
- Fragmentation of large blocks of mature forest. BLM lands in the Whiteline Reservoir area as discussed in the EA are scattered and sometimes isolated blocks of public domain. The BLM does manage some large contiguous blocks along Swan Lake Rim and in the Gerber Reservoir area. One of the objectives of the silvicultural prescription for the Whiteline Timber Sale is to maintain a component of mature trees to provide for late successional habitat. The treatment is generally a density management harvest where approximately 20- 35% of the basal area is removed. Upon completion of harvest, the stand will still be classified as mature forest even though there is not a large contiguous block to work with.

The Whiteline Timber Sale is the second advertised sale within the Bly Mtn. / Swan Lake Rim / Whiteline Reservoir Forest Health and Woodland Treatment EA analysis area.

The decision is consistent with the goals and objectives of the:

- ◻ Final Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) and its Record of Decision (June 1995).
- ◻ Klamath Falls Resource Area Fire Management EA (OR-014-94-09)
- ◻ Klamath Falls Resource Area Integrated Weed Control Plan EA (OR-014-93-09).
- ◻ Interior Columbia Basin Final Environmental Impact Statement / December 2000

The *Interior Columbia Basin Final Environmental Impact Statement - Proposed Decision* (ICBEMP - FEIS) was published in December of 2000. Alternative S2 was selected as the preferred alternative. No official direction has been given to the agencies in regards to incorporating that decision into the individual land use plans (RMPs) for the administrative units. The Whiteline Timber Sale will not preclude implementing the Proposed Decision but generally complies with the direction of Alternative S2 which states "The intent of management direction for landscape dynamics is to maintain or, if necessary, restore the health, productivity, and diversity of native fish, wildlife, and plants; maintain or improve water quality; sustain stream flows; and maintain and/or enhance the resiliency of forests and rangelands to fires, disease, and other disturbances." (Page 3 - ICBEMP - FEIS Proposed Decision).

Alternative A was selected because it best meets the overall objectives of the Klamath Falls RMP while minimizing impact. All impacts identified in the environmental assessment and identified by the general public are within the scope of the FEIS. Soil disturbance levels continue to be monitored annually to determine if impacts exceed those analyzed in the Klamath Falls FEIS. Two seasons of pre and post treatment stand exams of other RMP timber sales indicate that post-harvest stand characteristics (including canopy closure, residual large tree component, structure, and down woody material) are in compliance with the Klamath Falls RMP. Post-harvest biological surveys are indicating that the residual stands are continuing to serve as late successional habitat. A number of RMP harvested stands have received a follow-up underburn to reduce fire risks and initial results are positive.

Alternative B (exclude Swan Lake Rim) was rejected because the density and juniper encroachment issue is relevant to forest and woodlands on Swan Lake Rim. If helicopter logging on Swan Lake Rim is too costly, only those commercial forest stands that can be ground based logged will be treated.

Alternative C (salvage only) was also rejected because it does not adequately address density control needed to improve stand resiliency. The Roaming Salvage Timber Sale Environmental Assessment (EA # OR-014-96-02) addresses salvage harvest in the Klamath Falls Resource Area.

Alternative D (no treatment) was rejected because it provides no economic benefit to communities

associated with harvesting and processing forest products. The only density control under Alternative D would be through the use of prescribed fire. Existing conditions would not significantly improve if the areas were deferred from harvest. Under the no treatment alternative, the ongoing mortality in many existing stands may result in deteriorated stand conditions, increased fuel loads, and a corresponding increased risk of high intensity wildfires.

Mitigating Measures

- 1) During the public scoping, there was some requests that firewood be made available upon completion of harvesting. Availability of firewood from the Whiteline Timber Sale area will be dependent upon the access agreement that is negotiated between Jeld Wen Corporation and the BLM. Access, at a minimum, may only be granted to harvest and haul the timber. Access may be granted to remove potential firewood as well.
With the large amount of noncommercial fuel reduction work being done in the Bly Mtn./Klamath Forest Estates area, combined with the juniper woodland treatments in the Gerber Block, the KFRA has been able to meet most of the requests for firewood.
- 2) One of the issues raised during the public scoping and tours was the illegal dumping of trash on public lands in the area. Because most of the BLM lands in the treatment area are behind locked gates controlled by Jeld Wen, illegal dumping on public lands does not appear to be a problem at this time in Whiteline Timber Sale area. Most of the illegal dumping problem is occurring in the Bly Mtn./ Klamath Forest Estates area where cleanup options are being considered.

CONCLUSION

I have determined that neither a supplement to the Environmental Assessment (EA) nor a change to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Whiteline Timber Sale is necessary for these reasons:

The existing EA for the Whiteline Timber Sale fully covers the project. There will be no substantial changes to the action as proposed in the EA. The action is within the scope of the alternatives identified in the EA and the environmental impacts are within those analyzed in the EA.

There are no significant new circumstances or facts relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the modification to the proposed action or its impacts which were not addressed in the EA.

Teri A. Raml
Klamath Falls Resource Area Manager

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